

PRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE FORUM

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, on Monday night, I held a health care forum in my district to hear the thoughts and concerns of my constituents as we continue this critical debate on health care reform. There were strong feelings on all sides of the issue, but the important thing is we were able to come together and have a productive forum on the important factors that are central to reforming health care so that we can reduce costs, increase access, expand choice, and strengthen—yes, strengthen—Medicare.

I want to thank Temple Ner Tamid for hosting the forum; Mitch Fox for moderating with such grace; our panelists, Tom McCoy and Max Richtman; and especially the approximately 500 people who cared enough to come together and get involved in this discussion.

As the health care debate continues over the coming weeks, I look forward to sharing with my colleagues in the House on both sides of the aisle the valuable thoughts and ideas that were discussed at Monday's forum.

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PRESIDENT OBAMA REVERSES HIMSELF ON HEALTH CARE

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, during the Presidential campaign, Senator Obama ran an ad attacking Senator Clinton because her "health care plan forces everyone to buy insurance and you pay a penalty if you don't." If that sounds familiar, it should. That's exactly what the Obama administration is now forcing on the American people. What Senator Obama once criticized, President Obama now embraces.

Democrats' health care bills penalize people who don't buy the government's designated kind of health insurance, and the fine or tax can be close to \$2,000 per person. Just as bad, most people who do buy health insurance will pay higher premiums, and seniors, especially, will see their benefits cut according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

Senator Obama was right. President Obama is wrong. Why have so few in the national media pointed out the about-face, flip-flop, backtrack, and 180?

OUR NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE

(Mr. ARCURI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, the upcoming reauthorization of our surface

transportation programs provides us with a unique opportunity to examine the ways we can maximize the return on our investment of taxpayer dollars we make in our Nation's infrastructure. If we strive for both economic and environmental sustainability, I believe we should support the idea of having this Nation's infrastructure designed to last without maintenance as long as possible and be 100 percent recyclable. The technology to meet these goals exists today, and we will save billions of dollars over time and lighten the financial burden for future generations.

As we work to address the cost of rebuilding our roads, bridges, and transit systems, we can require the use of 75-year maintenance-free and 100 percent recyclable materials. If we do this, we will be able to fund more projects and make critical infrastructure improvements faster.

The technology that exists today to meet all of these goals is galvanized steel. Galvanized steel is made up of naturally occurring zinc bonded to steel, which protects it from erosion for 75 years without maintenance. Steel bridges, sign structures, guide rail, light poles, facilities can benefit from it. This is technology available to us.

DON'T COST MY PATIENTS COVERAGE OR BENEFITS

(Mr. FLEMING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, as a physician, a family physician for over 30 years, I must speak out again on health care. The President promised, promised that if you like what you have you, you can keep it. But it appears, with the current Democrat health plan, this is not true, at least when it comes to seniors.

Both the House and Senate proposals contain billions in cuts to Medicare Advantage, a very popular private insurance program that 25 percent of America's seniors have chosen for themselves. With ObamaCare this, the Greatest Generation, will lose benefits they currently enjoy, another broken promise by the President. Many seniors will be forced to pay for services such as supplemental vision or hearing coverage that was previously covered. Consequently, seniors will be dumped back into the regular Medicare that, according to this plan, will have \$300 billion stripped from it.

The net result of this broken promise for seniors, some of whom are my patients, will be to have substantial reduction in service, care, and benefits.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

(Mr. SCOTT of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, responsible health insurance reform re-

quires a comprehensive approach. For example, health insurance companies often deny coverage if you have a pre-existing condition. But if we require insurance companies to cover preexisting conditions, all Americans must be required to carry health insurance; otherwise, people will just wait until they get sick before they buy insurance. And if all Americans are going to be covered, we must have mandates and taxes to subsidize those who can't afford it.

Furthermore, in most States, there's only one company with an overwhelming market share, and so, without a public option, people in many States would be mandated to buy insurance from a sole-source, for-profit corporation without any limit on what it can charge. You know that's not fair.

So even though there is a consensus that people with preexisting conditions should be able to buy insurance at a reasonable cost, we cannot achieve that goal without mandates, subsidies, and a public option to provide competition. That's why we need comprehensive health insurance reform with a public option.

RECOGNIZING CASEY HILMER

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Casey Hilmer of Cincinnati, Ohio, of the suburb of Indian Hill for finishing fourth in the women's division of the 30th Columbus Marathon.

Casey, running her first marathon, and having no formal marathon training, finished with a time of 2 hours and 54 minutes. This was only 7 minutes behind the overall women's winner. Casey also finished first in her age bracket.

While her fourth place finish is extraordinarily impressive, it is what she overcame that brings me to this floor to celebrate her accomplishment. Ms. Hilmer's finish is made more impressive by what she's had to overcome.

More than 6 years ago, at the age of 13, she was attacked. As she was jogging near her parents' home, Casey was abducted and stabbed four times. Thankfully, this did not stop her from doing what she loves—running.

Mr. Speaker, I believe Casey is a shining example of perseverance and dedication. Casey will not be deterred. I am confident this strong young woman will accomplish every goal on which she sets her mind.

Congratulations, Casey, on your remarkable accomplishment. Perhaps your next goal—the Olympics.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. SARBANES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, more evidence is coming in every day that

the health insurance industry cannot help itself when it comes to pocketing profits at the expense of the American people and American businesses.

At precisely the moment when you would think the health insurance industry would want to demonstrate some restraint, because it's been telling us for months that it can accomplish voluntarily all the things that we want to try to impose in terms of better regulation on their practices, putting competition in place in terms of a public option, at precisely that moment when they have an opportunity to demonstrate restraint, I've been going around my district and hearing from businesses and employers who are just now getting the notices, the renewal notices on what the insurance premiums are going to be starting in January; and they're looking at 20 percent increases, 25 percent, 30 percent. So that sends a strong message that the insurance industry voluntarily is not going to do the right thing.

That's why we've got to get a good, strong insurance reform in place that puts best practices in place with respect to that industry and provides some competition. That's what we're working for right now.

PROSECUTING THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

(Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, we are a Nation at war, and our Commander-in-Chief is more focused on how to engineer a government takeover of our health care system than he is on prosecuting the war in Afghanistan. It is my belief, having read General McChrystal's 65-page report on what is necessary to win this war, that he was pressured by the administration to strip his request for how many troops out of this report.

When things were going bad in Iraq in 2007, the Commander-in-Chief then, George W. Bush, turned to his military commander on the ground in Iraq and said, What will it take to turn this situation around? And General Petraeus came up with a plan, came before the Armed Services Committees for the House and the Senate to address what was necessary to turn the tide in Iraq, and he was granted what he requested for.

The President needs to allow General McChrystal to give an honest assessment of what it will take to win in Afghanistan, and General McChrystal needs to share that with the Congress of the United States.

RYAN WHITE TREATMENT ACT

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise enthusiastically to sup-

port the extension of the Ryan White Treatment Act but also the full authorization.

I was here in Washington with Senator Kennedy and Senator ORRIN HATCH in 1990 when this vital, life-saving bill was implemented to provide treatment for those who were infected with HIV. I was a member of the Houston City Council at that time, in awe because of the high number of HIV cases in the city of Houston.

We must continue to address the treatment of HIV and the prevention of it, as well as ending the stigma that comes with that disease.

As well, let me say that it is important for health care reform to pass because we will get back to the idea of prevention and access for all to health care. And I'm very glad to support legislation in the Judiciary Committee that is going to stop price fixing for health premiums, health insurance premiums and medical malpractice premiums.

My good friends, extend and pass the Ryan White Treatment Act and support a vigorous public option for health care reform. America will see brighter days ahead of her and be able to provide access to health care for all Americans.

STOP VOTING TO KILL JOBS

(Mr. GINGREY of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, health insurance reform should not cost my patients their jobs. I have with me some disturbing numbers about our economy.

My home State of Georgia has a 10.1 percent unemployment rate. This is about 10 percent worse than when the Democrats passed their supposed "job creating stimulus bill." The overall unemployment rate in the United States, as we know now, is 9.8 percent, and 15 million Americans are actively looking for work.

Now, the Democrats are asking this Congress to vote to kill more jobs. Their health care reform plan, funded through massive new taxes on employers, will result in as many as 5.5 million additional lost jobs. Don't believe me? Well, ask the 22 Democrats who signed a letter to Speaker PELOSI on July 16 telling her the Obama plan would cause an increase of many small business taxes to up to 50 percent.

Mr. Speaker, Georgia businesses cannot afford any more job-killing taxes. And I respectfully ask you, on behalf of all Georgians, please stop voting to kill jobs.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY BY THE NUMBERS

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, through their words and votes, the Republican Party has been urging the American people not to stand in the way of a Great Depression. They unanimously voted against the President's economic stimulus package. But let me quote the nonpartisan economist, Robert Samuelson, this week. He says: In early 2009, consumer and business spending was collapsing. The stimulus has helped stabilize the economy. It has saved jobs that otherwise would have been lost. And interest rates didn't rise.

Now, there's obviously work still to be done. The numbers show, though, that we averted an economic depression and put our economy on a path toward recovery. We know that that road to recovery is long, but it's clear that things are starting to turn around.

A million jobs have been created or saved by the Recovery Act; 250,000 education jobs; 30,000 jobs created or saved by businesses that received Federal contracts from just a small part of the Recovery Act; and 500,000 responsible homeowners have signed up for the foreclosure prevention program.

Mr. Speaker, this stimulus investment is working and it deserves bipartisan support.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. You know, the American people cherish our freedom of speech and a free and independent press. That's why I found this morning's headlines so troubling.

Goaded on by a White House increasingly intolerant of criticism, lately the national media has taken aim at conservative commentators in radio and television, suggesting that they only speak for a small group of activists, and even suggests in one report today that Republicans in Washington are "worried about their electoral effect." Well, that's hogwash.

To suggest the men and women that are taking a stand for fiscal discipline and traditional values in the national debate today only speak for "grass-roots activists" is absurd. As evidenced by the hundreds of thousands who filled town hall meetings this summer and the nearly million Americans that gathered here in Washington in September, millions of American, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, are worried about liberal social policies and runaway Federal spending, deficit, and debt.

So, to my friends in the so-called mainstream media, I say, conservative talk show hosts may not speak for everybody, but they speak for more Americans than you do.